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How Reporters Got to FBI Files

Washington

Bob Katz was a 13-year-old high school student, sitting in an algebra class in Chicago, when he heard the news of President John F. Kennedy's assassination over a public address system.

Yesterday, he was the first of about 50 persons, most of them reporters, to be handed previously classified Federal Bureau of Investigation files on the Kennedy assassination.

Katz, now 30, got first call on the material because he was sitting in seat No. 1 in a small, tightly-secured room in the FBI Building—a room ordinarily used by experts to brief FBI agents on the latest crime techniques.

Katz and three colleagues, ranging in age from 25 to 42, asked to see the files as representatives of the Assassination Information Bureau, Inc., a private, nonprofit organization set up in 1974 in Cambridge, Mass., as a clearing house for information on the Kennedy assassination.

Members of the information bureau's advisory board are Norman Mailer, David Dellinger, Allen Ginsberg, Tom Hayden, Murray Kempton, Jack Newfield, Philip Nobile, K. Barton Osborn, Marcus Raskin and Peter Dale Scott. None of them were present for the opening of the files.

(In Berkeley, Scott, an associate professor of English at the University of California, said that, "on the basis of what little we've seen so far, all (of it) bears looking at quite closely. There are a lot of interesting new items—plus a lot of stuff we already had."

(Scott, 48, is one of three authors of a 1976 book called, "The Assassination: Dallas and Beyond—A Guide to Coverups and Investigations." He has been actively involved in research about the Kennedy killing since 1970. He added that he would like to see the files from Army Intelligence because "what was overlooked by the Warren Commission was where Army Intelligence turned up doing unexplained and anomalous things before, during and after the shooting."

(One of Scott's co-authors, University of California computer programmer Paul L. Hoch said, "I'm waiting to see if the FBI is going to release its pre-assassination files on Oswald, which were kept from the Warren Commission Staff.")

It was in a classroom atmosphere that Katz and his colleagues and the dozens of reporters for major newspapers, magazines, radio and television began delving into the FBI files yesterday.

They sat in armless chairs attached to rows of tables facing a blackboard on which those in charge of the project had jotted down the names of John F. Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby, who killed Oswald. By their names were certain numbers, indicating which files dealt with what subject.

An adjoining room, similarly equipped with tables, chairs and blackboard, had been set aside to accommodate scholars, historians, researchers, assassination buffs and others. However, by late yesterday the turnout of those wanting to read the files made it unnecessary to press the second room into use. Big news organizations such as NBC, Associated Press, United Press and the Washington Post had paid $4000.50 for their own copies.

New York Times

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The FBI's 'Nut' File On Kennedy

Washington

More than 1300 pages of the FBI documents relating to the assassination of John F. Kennedy are devoted to what might be called the "nut" file — apparently worthless leads investigated anyway.

There are one-page reports on hundreds of people, many of whom were overheard about the time of the assassination making some threatening remark like "Kennedy will get his."

The file includes such far-flung and unlikely suspects as a group of Jews in Winnipeg, Canada; the minister of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness of Times, and someone who signed a letter simply "Chicago housewife."

United Press